

**ASHFORD VOLUNTEER
FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC.**



**PROPOSED BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION STATEMENT	2
DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION	2
GLOSSARY OF BUDGET LINE ITEMS	5
BUDGET SUMMARY	10
BUDGET DETAIL	11

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Ashford Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. is to provide the highest quality emergency response, fire prevention, and hazard mitigation services possible to those living in, working in, or visiting its service area. This includes the timely and effective response to all calls for fires, rescues, medical emergencies, and hazardous materials incidents as well as assisting in determining the cause of fires and educating the public about fire and other safety issues.

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The Ashford Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. is an independent, nonprofit corporation. In 2006, the Internal Revenue Service officially recognized the department as a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization. The IRS made the designation retroactive to the department's inception.

The department was created by a group of local veterans in 1950 to fulfill a need in the community. From its inception, the department has been incorporated in the State of Connecticut. In 1976, the department entered into an exclusive agreement with the Ashford Board of Selectmen to provide fire protection and emergency medical services to the town.

In addition to its responsibilities to Ashford, the department participates in mutual aid agreements with a number of surrounding towns in Windham and Tolland Counties. The agreements require the department to provide support to those towns during emergencies that overwhelm local resources. These agreements directly benefit Ashford by guaranteeing it sufficient manpower and equipment in like circumstances.

The department is governed by a seven-member board of directors and managed on the operational side by a Chief and on the corporate side by a President. All directors, operational officers and corporate officers are elected at large by the department's active members.

The department is, and always has been, managed entirely by volunteers. Currently we have four full-time paid firefighter/emergency medical technicians who man the station from Midnight to 6pm, seven days a week. (2 FF/EMTs per shift). In addition, we employ seven firefighters and/or emergency medical technicians on a per diem basis to supplement the full time staff as needed. Currently, the department has approximately 15 volunteer members who respond to fire, medical or other emergencies as well as serving in various administrative roles. The paid staff and volunteers responded to 617 calls for service from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 (FY22/23).

Members of the department operate out of two fire stations, one located centrally near the intersections of Connecticut Routes 44 and 89 and the second located near the

heavily developed Lake Chaffee area at the northern end of Route 89. The department has three fire engines, an ambulance, a rescue truck, a service vehicle, and a boat at its immediate disposal.

GLOSSARY OF BUDGET LINE ITEMS

1. PERSONNEL

1.1 Employee Assistance Program

Consists of the cost for a confidential counseling and support service staffed by trained professionals to assist personnel in coping with the stress inherent in the public safety field.

1.2 Officer Expenses

Consists of the cost for professional periodical subscriptions and reimbursement of vehicle mileage at the federal government's rate for attendance at industry conferences and committee meetings that fall outside the officer's scope of operational responsibility.

1.3 Medical Expenses

Consists of the cost of physicals and vaccinations for firefighter active members.

1.4 Protective Clothing

Consists of the cost for flame and blood-borne pathogen resistant clothing for firefighters (i.e., bunker gear) as well as helmets, boots and gloves for firefighters.

1.5 Training

Consists of the cost for initial certifications of firefighters and training personnel at the department in new firefighting and medical techniques and procedures or to keep them proficient in existing techniques and procedures, and sending personnel to courses offered by other organizations to expand their knowledge.

1.6 Uniforms

Consists of the cost of duty wear (e.g., shirts, sweatshirts, and jackets) for active members to present a professional appearance at all emergency incidents and of Class A uniforms for more formal department occasions; Class A uniforms are available to only a select group of personnel who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the department and its mission.

1.7 Recruitment & Retention

Consists of the cost of brochures or other material designed to inform the public about membership opportunities with the department and to encourage members of the public to join; also includes the cost of gifts, awards and events designed to recognize the special achievements of personnel and express the department's appreciation for the selfless sacrifices that its volunteers make.

2. STATIONS

2.1 Repairs & Maintenance

Consists of the cost of cleaning, maintaining, repairing and supplying the department's two fire stations.

2.2 Service Contracts

Consists of contracts for air conditioner, generator, garage door, pest control and garbage collection services, etc.

2.3 Utilities

Consists of the cost for electricity, heating oil, telephones, and cable and Internet access for the department's fire stations, rental of solar panels at station 20.

2.4 Building Improvements

Consists of the cost for structural changes to the fire stations that does not otherwise constitute a repair.

2.5 Equipment Purchases

Consists of the cost of equipment purchased for the fire stations that falls outside the scope of operational or office equipment.

3. VEHICLES

3.1 Fuel

Consists of the cost of fuel for the department's fire apparatus and gas for portable power equipment.

3.2 Communications Services.

Consists of radio systems and Data systems for departments fire apparatus

3.3 Repairs & Maintenance

Consists of the cost to repair and maintain the department's apparatus.

3.4 Equipment Purchases

Consists of the cost for purchasing equipment that is installed permanently within one of the department's apparatus

4. OPERATIONS

4.1 Dry Hydrants

Consists of the cost of material to install, repair and maintain hydrants throughout the town.

4.2 Equipment Purchases

Consists of the cost for fire suppression, rescue or medical equipment used by personnel during emergencies.

4.3 Repairs & Maintenance

Consists of the cost to repair and maintain medical, fire and communication equipment.

4.4 Supplies

Consists of the cost for consumable medical and fire supplies as well as food and water for personnel during emergencies.

5. ADMINISTRATION

5.1 Dispatch Service

Consists of the cost to have the Tolland County Mutual Aid Fire Service, Inc. inform the department about, and dispatch the department to, all medical, rescue and fire emergencies in its service area.

5.2 Organization Membership

Consists of the cost to belong to and support the regional ambulance association, the National Fire Protection Association and the Tolland County Mutual Aid Fire Service, Inc., Connecticut State Fire Fighters Association.

5.3 Legal/Tax

Consists of the cost for complying with all legal requirements, including tax return preparation and corporate filing requirements. Costs of financial program audits.

5.4 Insurance

Consists of the cost to insure the department against liability or damage to or destruction of department assets as the result of negligence or accident and to provide personnel with coverage for accidental death, disability, or illness incurred as a result of their participation in emergency or other department operations.

5.5 Office Equipment & Supplies

Consists of the cost for business equipment (e.g., computers, copiers, fax machines), consumable office supplies (e.g., pens, paper), and postage.

5.6 Public Relations

Consists of the cost for the department's website, brochures and other material designed to inform the public about the department's activities and safety issues; also includes the cost for any gifts, events or contributions designed to improve the department's image

within the community or to express appreciation to specific individuals, groups or the community at large for supporting the department.

5.7 Miscellaneous

Consists of administrative costs that do not fall within one of the other administration categories.

5.8 IT Services Contract

Consists of the cost to support and maintain the department's computer network and infrastructure.

5.9 IAM Responding

Consists of the cost to provide an online system (real time) to identify what members are responding to incidents.

6. EMS Services

Emergency Medical Services (Costs to keep and maintain the Ambulance) are covered in their entirety by the department through the billing program. All transports are billed according to rates set by The State of Connecticut. These fees are collected and used to purchase the ambulance, upkeep the ambulance, purchase all equipment, supplies, etc., that are required to maintain the service. Any funds in excess of those required to operate the EMS service are used to offset total operating costs. This reduces the amount of appropriation funding requested from the town accordingly. For budget clarity and appropriation request submission, the EMS services category, 6, is displayed to show the cost to maintain the service. These dollar amounts are not included in funding requests. Estimated excess collections are shown as revenue and applied to the total revenue line.

6.1 Reserved

6.2 Billing Service

Consist of the amount paid to a company to manage the billing process for the department's ambulance service.

6.3 Paramedics

Consists of the amount paid to Windham Hospital for advanced life support services to the department's patients in the form of both a quarterly fee based on the population of Ashford plus an additional cost per emergency call.

6.4 EMS Personnel

Consists of the cost for training (initial and refresher certifications plus continuing education), physical examinations, vaccinations, and personnel protective clothing and equipment for all EMS personnel.

6.5 EMS Equipment

Consists of the cost to purchase and maintain EMS equipment used during emergency incidents, including but not limited to automatic external defibrillators and the ambulance.

6.6 EMS Supplies

Consists of the cost for consumable medical supplies

6.7 EMS Organization Dues

Consists of the cost to belong and to support the regional ambulance Association.

6.8 Ambulance Replacement Fund

Consists of the amount the department transfers to a certificate of deposit annually to ensure sufficient funds to replace the ambulance every five to six years.

6.9 Ambulance Fuel

Consists of the actual cost's of fuel and proper accounting under EMS services.

7. Paid Staff

Paid staff funding is the largest part of the department's budget. Paid staff are used to man the department in the absence of available volunteers. Paid staff cover both fire apparatus and the ambulance.

7.1.1 Wages

Consists of projected wages of paid staff

7.1.2 FICA/Taxes

Consists of projected taxes from payroll of paid staff

7.1.3 Payroll services

Costs associated with the payroll program for the paid staff.

7.2 Duty Uniforms

Costs associated with the on duty uniforms worn by the paid staff.

7.3 Physicals (Annual)

Costs associated with the annual physicals.

7.4 FICA/Workman's Compensation

Consists of the employer's costs for Workman's compensation for the departments paid staff.

BUDGET SUMMARY

For fiscal year 2024-2025, the Ashford Volunteer Fire Department requests an appropriation from the Town of Ashford in the amount of \$651,115. The requested appropriation equates to 76% of the department's overall operating budget. The remaining 24% is covered by the fire department through EMS Services and donations. The appropriation request constitutes a cost to the taxpayers of \$153 per person (given a population of 4,260).

This years funding request is a substantial increase over previous years. The department has worked diligently to flatten or reduce costs where appropriate. Continued increases in goods and services necessitate increases in certain line items, notably; insurance, dispatch services and repairs/maintenance.

Overall, the largest portion of the increase is driven by labor costs. The department is seeking to staff the main fire station 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with two paid staff. The limited availability of volunteers necessitates this change. Consequently, the paid staff program is necessary to ensure continued protection of life and property in the Town of Ashford. The increase in coverage makes the total projected total labor cost \$571,500. This amount also includes a \$1.00/hour raise, as well as providing for PTO days for full time employees. It should be noted that, unlike any other department or appropriated entity in town, the fire department does not offer any benefits, including health insurance or sick time. The pay increase and PTO benefit would be a step toward correcting this problem and help to retain full time employees

BUDGET DETAIL GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DETAILS	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
			Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Proposed
REVENUE	1. Appropriations	Town	\$310,696	\$317,465	\$383,165	\$452,665	\$651,115
	TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS		\$310,696	\$317,465	\$383,165	\$452,665	\$651,115
	2. Ambulance	Billing Proceeds	\$170,000	\$178,000	\$186,000	\$188,000	\$200,000
	ESTIMATED AMBULANCE REVENUE OFFSET		\$81,420	\$88,770	\$92,170	\$84,420	\$81,720
	3. Other	Grants –general	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
		Donations- general	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
		Fund raising Proceed	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	TOTAL OTHER		\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
	TOTAL REVENUE		\$399,616	\$413,735	\$482,835	\$544,585	\$740,335
EXPENSES	1. Personnel	1.1 Employee Assistance	\$1,100	\$900	\$900	\$900	\$900
		1.2 Officer Expense	\$1,400	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700
		1.3 Medical Expense	\$900	\$900	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
		1.4 Protective Clothing	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000
		1.5 Training	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
		1.6 Uniforms	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$500
		1.7 Recruit/retention	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$500
	TOTAL PERSONNEL		\$9,050	\$9,150	\$9,250	\$9,250	\$11,600
	2. Stations	2.1 Repairs & Maint.	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$9,000	\$10,000
		2.2 Service contracts	\$3,300	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000

BUDGET DETAIL GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DETAILS	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
	2.3	Utilities	\$25,000	\$22,500	\$25,000	\$27,500	\$27,500
	2.4	Building Improvements	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	2.5	Equipment Purchases	\$250	\$0	\$250	\$500	\$500
		TOTAL STATIONS	\$36,050	\$33,000	\$35,750	\$41,000	\$43,000
3. Vehicles	3.1	Fuel	\$2,500	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$4,000
	3.2	Communications Servic	\$1,450	\$1,450	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
	3.3	Repairs & Maint.	\$9,500	\$9,500	\$9,500	\$11,000	\$15,000
	3.4	Equipment Purchases	\$0	\$500	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500
		TOTAL VEHICLES	\$13,450	\$13,450	\$14,500	\$16,500	\$22,000
4. Operations	4.1	Dry Hydrants	\$500	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$1,000
	4.2	Equip Purchases	\$7,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
	4.3	Repairs & Maint.	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$10,500	\$10,500
	4.4	Supplies	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$500	\$500
		TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$16,750	\$15,500	\$15,500	\$17,250	\$18,000
5. Administration	5.1	Dispatch Service	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$15,000	\$18,000	\$19,500
	5.2	Organization memb.	\$650	\$550	\$650	\$650	\$650
	5.3	Legal/Tax expenses	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$800	\$800
	5.4	Insurance	\$30,800	\$31,800	\$33,500	\$36,850	\$45,000
	5.5	Office equip/supplies	\$2,760	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	5.6	Public relations	\$1,300	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200

BUDGET DETAIL GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DETAILS	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
	5.7	Miscellaneous	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
	5.8	IT service contract	\$4,000	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
	5.9	IAM Responding	\$650	\$735	\$735	\$735	\$735
	TOTAL ADMINISTRATION		\$55,110	\$55,335	\$58,135	\$64,585	\$74,235
6.	EMS Services	6.2 Billing Service	\$15,500	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$18,000
		6.3 Para medics	\$20,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$21,000	\$23,000
		6.3.2 Per Capita Fee	\$4,300	\$4,250	\$4,250	\$6,000	\$6,500
		6.4.1.1 Physicals	\$3,000	\$2,750	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
		6.4.1.2 Vaccinations	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200
		6.4.2 PPE	\$500	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250
		6.4.3 Insurance Pack 1/4	\$14,200	\$14,400	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$15,000
		6.4.4 Training	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
		6.5.1 AED service contract	\$2,000	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$2,000
		6.5.2 Ambulance Maint.	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
		6.5.3 Amb. Registration	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
		6.5.4 Equipment Maint.	\$250	\$500	\$250	\$250	\$250
		6.5.5 Equipment Purchase	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
		6.6 Supplies	\$3,800	\$4,500	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
		6.7 Dues	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30
		6.8 Amb. Replacement	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$25,000
		6.9 Amb. Fuel	\$4,750	\$5,000	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500
	TOTAL EMS SERVICES		\$88,580	\$89,230	\$93,830	\$103,580	\$118,280

BUDGET DETAIL GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DETAILS	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
7. Paid Staff	7.1	Wages	\$192,402	\$205,000	\$250,000	\$290,000	\$450,000
	7.1.2	FICA/Taxes	\$53,128	\$58,000	\$70,000	\$78,000	\$88,000
	7.1.3	Payroll Service	\$4,000	\$4,300	\$5,200	\$8,000	\$10,000
	7.2	Duty Uniforms	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$3,000
	7.3	Physicals	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,500
	7.4	Workers Comp.	\$17,676	\$18,000	\$22,500	\$18,000	\$18,000
TOTAL PAID STAFF			\$269,206	\$287,300	\$349,700	\$396,000	\$571,500
TOTAL GENERAL BUDGET EXPENSE (Includes EMS Services line items.)			\$488,196	\$502,965	\$576,665	\$648,165	\$858,615